

**Testimony before the House Sub-Committee on Domestic & International Monetary Policy
HR 3591-- Congressional Gold Medal to Ronald & Nancy Reagan
Congressman Jim Gibbons
March 15, 2000**

Mr. Chairman:

I would like to thank you and the members of the Sub-committee, for holding this hearing today to discuss the historic legacy of former President and First Lady Ronald and Nancy Reagan.

It is a true honor for me to appear with such a distinguished panel of former officials and colleagues of the Reagan Administration.

First, with unanimous consent, I would like to submit the testimony of former U.S. Senator Paul Laxalt, a revered national leader and close friend of the Reagans.

By virtue of his friendship with Ronald Reagan, which developed while they served as Governors of neighboring states in the 1960s, Senator Laxalt served as the President's "eyes and ears" on Capitol Hill and was often referred to as "The First Friend."

Unfortunately, Senator Laxalt could not be here today to testify, but he wanted his remarks included in the Record.

Mr. Chairman, the Reagans have dedicated their lives to promoting national pride and bettering the quality of life in America. In recognition of their distinguished record of service to the United States, I have introduced H.R. 3591, a bill to award the Congressional Gold Medal to Ronald and Nancy Reagan.

President Reagan began his public life as a successful Hollywood actor before running for elected office. He then served two terms as Governor of California, where he was dedicated to encouraging economic expansion and recognizing the value of hard work.

These ideals, as well as his belief that “everyone can rise as high and as far as their ability will take them” became the pillars of his presidency.

As President of the United States, Ronald Reagan successfully turned the tide of public cynicism and sparked a national renewal. During his eight years in office, he succeeded in stimulating economic growth, increasing employment, curbing inflation, and strengthening national defense.

Additionally, President Reagan inspired hope and pride in the hearts of millions of Americans, particularly among young people, by restoring belief in the American Dream.

As former Attorney General Edwin Meese once eloquently stated, “President Reagan had faith in the good conscience and the good motives of people themselves. He challenged people as individuals, and as citizens working in community groups, to take more responsibility for their own lives.”

Under President Reagan’s leadership, monumental international changes also took place. Ronald Reagan was instrumental in uniting a divided Berlin, as well as a divided world, by bringing about an end to the Cold War. These events established the U.S. as the sole, world superpower, a title which we still proudly claim today.

Standing by his side, President Reagan’s wife, Nancy, not only served as a gracious First Lady,

but also as a distinguished leader in her own right. Mrs. Reagan first became known for her commitment to community service during her husband's tenure as Governor of California. She regularly made visits to hospitals and homes for the elderly, as well as to schools for physically and emotionally handicapped children.

As First Lady of the United States, Mrs. Reagan had the opportunity to expand her public service nationally. Perhaps her most notable and longest-lasting achievement was her campaign against substance abuse. She tirelessly traveled throughout the country promoting her "Just Say No" campaign, a project aimed at preventing alcohol and drug use among our youth.

And even today, Mrs. Reagan continues to be an active public leader. She has become a champion for increasing funding for research on Alzheimer's disease, the debilitating illness that her husband, our former President, now deals with everyday. Mrs. Reagan has become a role model to all caregivers of Alzheimers patients.

Mr. Chairman, the Reagans have dedicated much of their lives to our nation. Their leadership and service extended well beyond President Reagan's tenure in office. I strongly believe that the Congressional Gold Medal would be a fitting tribute to their dedication and commitment to public service.

Finally, I would like thank the Sub-Committee for the opportunity to share my thoughts on this issue. I would also like to thank the many Members of Congress, especially Congresswoman Jennifer Dunn, for supporting H.R. 3591 which will award the Congressional Gold Medal to the Reagans.